Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

Since my article on the second page in answer to Mr. Westrup was put in type, "Egoism" of San Francisco has frankly confessed its error in subscribing to Mr. Westrup's opposition to the idea of a standard of value.

The State Socialists and Single Taxers are quarreling as to which party was the object of the Pope's encyclical. Their attitude reminds one of two valets presenting their posteriors to a master in jealous rivalry for the honor of a kick.

D. De Leon, whom the New York Socialists have placed at the head of their State ticket, is to lecture in Cooper Union July 31 on "What I Shall Do When Governor." Will De Leon kindly make a date to tell us what he will do when God? The equal remoteness of the two contingencies makes them equally unprofitable subjects of discussion.

Says the Boston "Globe": "A foreign observer could easily tell that the American people were firm believers in the theory that that government is best that governs least by the sigh of relief that always goes up from the people of every State when its legislature adjourns." But the intelligent foreign observer is also likely to observe that the American people strictly confine their demonstrations of disapproval of paternalism and legislative iniquity to these "sighs of relief," and do absolutely nothing to check the progress of those legislative practices that can only be justified on the theory that that government is best which governs most.

Edward Atkinson protests that he has ever spoken on behalf of personal liberty, and nobody who is familiar with his conception of personal liberty will be disposed to doubt him or to withhold from him such credit as he deserves. "I maintain," says he fearlessly, "that no one has the right to say that you shall not use your faculties according to your will." Excellent! cries the innocent reader. But he is "too previous." Atkinson goes on to explain: "A man has the right to his personal liberty — to use his time, his brain, and his faculties as he sees fit, *provided he is guided by the statute law"!* Three times three cheers for this brave old champion of personal liberty — such as is accorded by statute law!

Grant Allen preaches simple living and considers luxury of any kind unworthy of true and noble humanity. It is interesting to know how he justifies the publication of his new novel, "What's Bred in the Bone," which has no tendency of any kind and points no reform moral. The reading of such a novel is certainly pure luxury, whatever the writing of it may be. It is not a "useful" novel, and will not help progress in any way, though it is uncommonly bright and readable. From Mr. Allen's point of view, it is a grave offence to waste time either on writing or reading such "stuff"; and he owes his "true religion" and fellow-believers an apology. From my point of view it is much more useful for Mr. Allen to write such novels than to preach simplicity and defend State Socialism; but this does not interest Mr. Allen.

The Toronto "Labor Advocate" is moved to say some things about Col. Ingersoll *à propos* of his sickening article in the June "North American Review" which the average Secularist will not relish. It is for this reason, among others, that I reproduce the scathing arraignment in Liberty. At the same time justice requires me to state that Ingersoll's sins are due rather to his shallowness and ignorance than to any desire to bolster up the iniquities of the plutocracy. Ingersoll is a poet, but of exact reasoning he is utterly incapable. He has an insight into those large questions of universal human nature with which poets and seers deal; but of the more special ethical, economic, and political questions occupying the minds of scientific thinkers, publicists, investigators, and social philosophers he is as ignorant as the average Christian minister is of the natural history of religion. Ingersoll's ignorance, however, has no tendency to restrain him from arguing and even dogmatizing, just as the minister's ignorance fails to act as a bar to pulpit attempts at "enlightening" the church-attending simpletons.

Here is a rare piece of common sense from the New York "Sun": "A man who is as good a republican as he is a musician has been arrested in Munich, and will probably be imprisoned, for playing in the streets tunes thought likely to excite sedition. The arrest seems arbitrary enough, but it can hardly be called irrational when one considers how inspiring and suggestive are the tunes of popular political songs in days of political excitement, like the Marseillaise in the French Revolution and Yankee Doodle in our own, or the quaint shrill tune they pipe in Ireland that means the boycotting of a farm. If speech be forbidden, other modes of expression take its place, and music becomes as significant as words, and a creed may be condensed in a color. Anything may be a symbol, from a cross on a watch chain to the shape of the beard. One might imagine a perfume being condemned, and not without reason, as seditious. From any suppression of the utmost freedom of speech to the minutest, most intolerable regulation of private life, there is logically and practically only a difference of degree."

A bill to abolish bachelorhood among State officials will be laid before the German Reichstag. Several societies of women are in favor of the measure. The explanatory "motive," which accompanies all bills before the Reichstag, will in this case read as follows: "In the interest of unmarried women, the Government is under obligations to take measures for the suppression of bachelorhood, especially in view of the fact that German women are not admitted to places in the departments which were formerly open to them. The principle of the necessary marriage law must be that every official of certain grades must marry or sacrifice one-fourth of his salary and all his house money. The money collected by the infliction of these penalties should be made a pension fund for the unmarried daughters of Government officials. An exception to the rule might be made in the cases of officials who had parents or sisters to support. Thus, many women who would otherwise remain spinsters would be cared for and their aims in life would be reached, while to many who found no chance to marry a comfortable old age would be assured."

The Washington "National Economist," in an editorial showing the propriety of the sub-treasury scheme from a constitutional point of view, takes occasion to say: "The sub-treasury plan cannot be killed by great constitutional arguments, but as soon as ever some man proposes something better it will die a natural death. Here is a grand opportunity for destruction without verbal deluges or stentorian combats with time. In giving away this thing, — that the way to cause the sub-treasury plan to die is to produce a thing which is better, all responsibility to the Alliance is here assumed; nay, more, if the proposer of that thing be like General Washington, in that his modesty surpasses his merit, if he will send the thing here, the public shall have knowledge of it." The writer of this would not attempt to be so funny if he knew the literature of free and mutual banking. Something infinitely better than the sub-treasury plan, something sounder politically as well as financially, has long been known and advocated. That something will kill, not only the sub-treasury plan, but the Farmers' Alliance and all other paternalistic organizations and movements.

In a recent London sale was a letter from Carlyle on a lecture by Emerson that had been sent him, in which he comments in a characteristic manner upon the Brook Farm movement. He says: "Thanks for your gift of Emerson's lecture. It is an excellent discourse, greatly wanted on both sides of the Atlantic, and cannot be too widely circulated. Probably you are not aware that in New England a certain set of persons, grounding themselves on these ideas of Emerson's, are already about renouncing this miserable humbug of a world altogether, and retiring into the rural wilderness, to live there exclusively upon vegetables raised by their own digging. Three hours' daily work, they say, will produce a man sufficient vegetables, and he can live there according to his own mind, leaving the world to live according to its. An American was here lately, as an express missionary of all that, working for recruits, for proselytes; naturally finding none. I was obliged to express my total, deep, irreclaimable dissent from the whole vegetable concern, not without great offence to the missionary, and that, perhaps, is the reason why he sent me no American copy of this lecture. Emerson does not yet go into vegetables, into rural hermitship; and we hope never will."

"It is useless to reason with people about the superstitions by which they are possessed," says "Today"; and I am inclined to agree with it. And it is this consciousness no doubt which led Byron to say that satire should be the song when fools are the theme. Satire, sarcasm, ridicule are the most effective weapons with which to assail superstition; and the knowledge of this effectiveness of satire is a source of immense enjoyment to those who fight superstition. The writer whom I have quoted cannot sympathize with that other writer of "Today" who lectured Uncle Benjamin for his raillery at religious superstitions and sneered at Liberty for its commendation of Uncle Benjamin. Or is it possible that the same man that turned up his nose at "blasphemous" satire is the author of the remark about the futility of arguing with superstitious people? Well, it is not impossible: we only need to assume, in order to account for the manifest incongruity, that the writer, while appreciating the virtue of satire in general, is possessed of the superstition that the employment of satire against religious superstitions is foolish, wicked, and naughty. And you know, it is useless to reason with people about their superstitions, or to expect that they themselves will apply to them the test of reason.

Liberty.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the excisemen, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

☞ E. C. WALKER, formerly editor of "Fair Play" and now a regular contributor to the columns of Liberty, is also an authorized agent for Liberty and for all books and pamphlets published by Benj. R. Tucker.

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"Sexual Communism."

A controversy is in progress in "Free Life" between Auberon Herbert, the editor, and his principal contributor, M. D. O'Brien, on the subject of State control of the sexual relations. Rare is the man who at some point in the circle of his political theory does not fly off at a tangent, and Mr. O'Brien, who is a stanch friend of liberty, makes his tangential departure when liberty enters the home. It is needless to say that Mr. Herbert, who preserves his consistency here, easily gets the better of his contributor.

But I refer to the matter in order to protest against an opinion upon which they incidentally develop an agreement. Believing that monogamy is the ideal form of sexual life, these gentlemen agree in describing non-monogamic association as "sexual communism." Such an application of the term communism is either very careless or very unscientific. If I choose to talk with more than one person, am I therefore a communist? If I choose to walk with more than one person, am I therefore a communist? If I choose to cooperate with more than one person to further the cause of Individualism or Anarchism, am I therefore a communist? If I choose to form a business partnership or partnerships with more than one person, am I therefore an industrial, commercial, or financial communist? If I choose to unite with more than one person for defence, am I therefore a political communist? To all these questions Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Herbert will undoubtedly give negative answers. But if, then, I choose to sleep with more than one person, am I therefore a sexual communist? Here also must not the answer be negative? Surely.

The question of communism does not turn upon the number of persons in the association, but upon the principle that governs the association. Where there is no dividing line, where there is inextricable entanglement of interests, where there is limitless fusion of responsibility, there is communism, though the number of persons concerned be but two. But where there is individuality, where interests are ever separable, where responsibility is definite, there is no communism, though the number of persons concerned include the entire population of the globe. Judged by this standard, those who live monogamically not only may be, but nine hundred and ninety-nine times in a thousand *are*, sexual communists, whereas many, perhaps most, of those who do not live monogamically are sexual individualists.

I am not now defending sexual variety, though I am ready to do so; I am simply establishing the fact that variety and communism are not one and the same thing. Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Herbert have been led by a common impulse to stigmatize as communism, which they hate and I hate with them, a form of sexual life which they deplore, but which I and many individualists look upon as ideal. We do not ask them to subscribe to our view, but we do ask them not to misrepresent it. I am sure that Mr. Herbert, and I hope that Mr. O'Brien, will see and publicly acknowledge the injustice of which each has been guilty. T.

A Necessity or a Delusion, — Which?

To the Editor of Liberty:

It is not only a delusion, but a misuse of language, to talk of a "standard of value." Give us a standard of pain or pleasure, and you may convince us that there can be a "standard of value." I am well aware of the difficulty of discussing this question, even with so precise an editor as Mr. Tucker; but since he has called in question the views presented in my pamphlet, I feel called upon to lay before the readers of Liberty some additional arguments to show the correctness of what Mr. Tucker has honored me by calling "the Westrup view."

Let us consider for a moment the practical workings of a Mutual Bank as near as we can foretell them.

The incentive to organize a Mutual Bank is the opportunity of borrowing money at a very low rate of interest and no additional expense. This desideratum is not confined to a few individuals, but is well-nigh universal. It follows, therefore, that the starting of a bank will draw to it a large number of people, embracing producers and dealers in almost, perhaps all, commodities. One of the conditions in obtaining the notes (paper money) of the Mutual Bank is that they will be taken in lieu of current money without variation in the price of the commodities by those who borrow them. This condition is just, and will be readily acquiesced in without a murmur. At the very outset of the Mutual Bank, then, we have at least dealers in most of the ordinary commodities who will accept its money in place of current money. This certainty of its redemption in commodities at their market-price in current money guarantees its circulation.

Strictly speaking, the Mutual Bank does not issue the money; it simply furnishes it and is the custodian of the collateral pledged to insure its return. It is the borrowers who both issue and redeem.

The transaction between the bank and the borrower is of no interest to the public previous to the *issue* of any of the money by the borrower. Neither is it concerned with the transaction between the borrower and the bank after the former has *redeemed* all the money he borrowed.

Discussing theories is far less important than efforts to put in practice such momentous reforms as the application of the mutual feature to the supply of the medium of exchange. If Comrade Tucker really desires the establishment of Mutual Banks, it seems to me he would naturally discuss the practicability of such institutions. Let him point out wherein the above forecast is unsound. Let him show the necessity for a "standard of value," and suggest how to introduce one; perhaps I may become converted. I shall most surely acknowledge my error if I am convinced, but I have no time or inclination to discuss any abstract theory about a "standard of value." The one question that seems to me of importance is the practicability of the Mutual Bank. If it is not practicable, why is it not so? If it is, why waste time and space in discussing whether the first or the second or any other commodity exchanged becomes the "measure or standard of value"; especially as "the whole trouble disappears with the abolition of the basis privilege."

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Mr. Westrup's article sustains in the clearest manner my contention that money is impossible without a standard of value. Starting out to show that such a standard is a delusion, he does not succeed in writing four sentences descriptive of his proposed bank before he adopts that "delusion." He tells us that "one of the conditions in obtaining the notes (paper money) of the Mutual Bank is that they will be taken *in lieu of current money*." What does this mean? Why, simply that the patrons of the bank agree to take its notes as the equivalent of gold coin of the same face value. In other words, they agree to adopt gold as a standard of value. They will part with as much property in return for the notes as they would part with in return for gold. And if there were no such standard, the notes would not pass at all, because nobody would have any idea of the amount of property that he ought to exchange for them. The *naivete* with which Mr. Westrup gives away his case shows triumphantly the puerility of his raillery at the idea of a standard of value.

Indeed, Comrade Westrup, I ask nothing better than to discuss the practicability of mutual banks. All the work that I have been doing for liberty these nineteen years has been directed steadily to the establishment of the conditions that alone will make them practicable. I have no occasion to show the necessity for a standard of value. Such necessity is already recognized by the people whom we are trying to convince of the truth of mutual banking. It is for you, who deny this necessity, to give your reasons. And in the very moment in which you undertake to tell us why you deny it, you admit it without knowing it. It would never have occurred to me to discuss the abstract theory of a standard of value. I regard it as too well settled. But when you, one of the most conspicuous and faithful apostles of mutual banking, begin to bring the theory into discredit and ridicule by basing your arguments in its favor on a childish attack against one of the simplest of financial truths, I am as much bound to repudiate your heresy as an engineer would be to disavow the calculations of a man who should begin an attempt to solve a difficult problem in engineering by denying the multiplication table.

I fully recognize Mr. Westrup's faithful work for freedom in finance and the ability with which he often defends it. In fact, it is my appreciation of him that has prevented me from criticising his error earlier. I did not wish to throw any obstacle in the path or in any way dampen the enthusiasm of this ardent propagandist. But when I see that admirable paper, "Egoism," of San Francisco, putting forward those writings of Mr. Westrup which contain the objectionable heresy; and when I see that other admirable paper, "The Herald of Anarchy," of London, led by his or similar ideas to advocate the issue of paper bearing on its face the natural prices of all commodities (!); and when I see Individualists holding Anarchism responsible for these absurdities and on the strength of them making effective attacks upon a financial theory which, when properly defended, is invulnerable, — it seems high time to declare that the free and mutual banking advocated by Proudhon, Greene, and Spooner never contemplated for a moment the desirability or the possibility of dispensing with a standard of value. If others think that a standard of value is a delusion, let them say so by all means; but let them not say so in the name of the financial theories and projects which the original advocates of mutual banking gave to the world. T.

Philosophical Anarchism Indicted.

A Canadian labor paper credits the following to the American "Journal of the Knights of Labor":

Whether they know it or not, the "philosophical Anarchists" of the Tucker and Yarros clique, in opposing to the best of their ability ameliorative measures of legislation and government control of monopolies, are doing the work of capitalism as effectively in proportion to the extent of their influence — fortunately not very great — as the more orthodox literary hirelings of the money power. The latter have at least an intelligible motive for their course, — capitalism is willing to pay handsomely for the use of their brains and pens. But the philosophical Anarchists appear to be actuated by sheer perversity. They are entirely out of sympathy with the struggling, toiling masses, and preach an abstract creed of individualism that has absolutely no meaning to those crushed under the burdens heaped upon them by the competitive system. When analyzed, their misty and vague philosophical phraseology is a justification for the worst evils of capitalism, which are nothing more than the legitimate outgrowth of the liberty of every man to do as he pleases to promote his own interests regardless of the welfare of others. Whatever were the faults and mistakes of the Anarchists of the blood-and-thunder school, they at least were sincerely fanatical in the cause of the workers as against the spoliators, and their worst excesses were prompted by their intense hatred of the wrongs perpetrated by capitalism in the name of law and order. The so-called philosophical Anarchists have nothing in common with them but the name, and apparently no desire to better

the condition of society or to do anything but split hairs over fine points of individualist theory.

Here we have at once an indictment and a verdict. Fortunately the Socialistic State is not yet with us, or upon us rather, and the verdict of the "Journal" threatens us no loss of liberty or opportunity. A few words, however, may be said with reference to the charges contained in the indictment, which charges are just four in number.

The first is that, in opposing ameliorative measures of legislation and government control of monopolies, we are doing the work of capitalism. If to denounce the present system, to point out the causes of existing evils, and to advocate what we consider the needful remedies, is to do the work of capitalism, we plead guilty to the charge. But since the dullest jury would hesitate to convict on such an absurd charge, it is claimed in the second count that, instead of pointing out evils and proposing definite remedies, we preach an abstract creed of individualism that has absolutely no meaning to those who groan under the present system. But this charge is simply an ignorant as well as malicious falsehood. Any intelligent man who reads any three issues of Liberty must be impressed with the fact that we do not content ourselves with preaching an abstract creed of individualism, but argue in favor of, and insist upon, certain definite practical reforms which are at least as easy of achievement as any that the revolutionary reformers and champions of compulsory measures have to offer. That we are able to square our practical reforms with, and deduce them from, an abstract creed and a general philosophical principle we claim to be our distinctive merit and superior title to scientific consideration. "Methods that answer must be preceded by thoughts that are true," and the truly practical reformer is he who can philosophically establish the concordance between his practical proposals and high general principles. It is better to offer principles without practical suggestions and applications than to offer, as State Socialists do, practical measures that find no warrant in any true general principles. We, however, offer both; and that this is true, any three issues of this journal will show to the unprejudiced mind.

In the third count it is charged that we are out of sympathy with the struggling, toiling masses, that we have no desire to better the condition of society, and that we are actuated in our work — already characterized as worse than useless — by sheer perversity. Now, what evidence is there in support of this charge? It is true that we are not sentimentalists and do not waste our time and space on monotonous descriptions of the miseries of the poor and of the filth, vice, corruption, brutality, and horrors that we behold on all sides. That we leave to novelists, poets, newspaper reporters, and Christian Socialists. We have more important work to do, from which far greater benefits may be expected to result to society at large. Not to work with a certain class does not necessarily imply working against them. We work in the interest of labor, though labor in its present ignorance may not appreciate our methods or even our intentions. It should be added here, perhaps, that the alleged unanimity of labor in favor of State Socialism is no longer a fact, and will soon be known as a fiction. The sympathies of labor are becoming divided between liberty and compulsion, and the Anarchistic leaven is working in the mass: Herr Most can testify to that.

Most serious of all is the fourth and last charge in the fourth count, — namely, that our "misty and vague philosophical phraseology is a justification for the worst evils of capitalism, which are nothing more than the legitimate outgrowth of the liberty of every man to do as he pleases to promote his own interests regardless of the welfare of others." Whether our philosophical phraseology is misty and vague or clear and lucid, the impartial competent jury must determine. Let a peasant open any scientific book, and the phraseology will be to him misty and vague. Let an ignorant Christian believer read Spencer's "First Principles," and he will accuse the philosopher whom he is incapable of comprehending of talking unintelligible jargon. Similarly, to the average State Socialist, totally unsuspicious of the problems of social science, the phraseology of scientific individualism must needs appear vague and misty. As to the familiar unintelligent assertion that the worst evils of capitalism are the legitimate outgrowth of equal liberty, I do not imagine that any refutation of it is here advisable. So ignorant of the meaning of equal liberty is he who affirms that it prevails here and now that the wisest course is to let him alone. One can reason with a man who, understanding your contentions and demands, professes to possess sufficient grounds for denying their justice or feasibility; but the man who listens to you and assures you that you are perfectly understood, and who then contemptuously tells you that what you plead for has long been enjoyed, tried, and found wanting, — this man is to be studiously ignored and avoided by those who are not blessed with exceptional strength and patience. One remark, however, this last charge does seem to call for. The present condition is described as one in which everybody has the liberty to do as he pleases regardless of the welfare of others. Such a condition is an impossibility. If *everybody* can do as he pleases, then it is impossible for *anybody* to enjoy the liberty of doing as he pleases *regardless of the welfare of others*. Equal liberty is incompatible with tyranny. Today some have more than their share, and consequently others have to put up with less than their share. Equal liberty, of course, means the the right of each to do as he pleases consistently with the like claims of others.

We are now content to leave the case in the hands of the competent and fair-minded jury.

V. Y.

The Power of Government over Values.

To the Editor of Liberty:

In reference to your remarks upon my recent contribution to the London "Herald of Anarchy," dogmatism of manner must often be adopted to avoid verbosity; it is not necessarily an assumption of infallibility.

The action of governments with regard to gold is not truly analogous in its economic effects to the prohibition of theatrical performances on Sunday. In the last named case, or in any similar case which we may suppose, the effect is to diminish demand and to prolong or retard consumption. Thus, if we were prohibited from wearing shoes, boots, etc., on Sunday, or if every seventh person were prevented from using them, then boots which now wear out in six months would last seven months, and we may suppose theatres which now last seven years or seventy would then be worn out in six or sixty. The immediate effect of opening theatres on Sunday would probably be to increase their value very greatly, but eventually others would be built, and competition would reduce the previously enhanced value. The residual enhancement of value would be that resulting from the increased expense of producing the last increment in the number of theatres which the market in its altered circumstances could support. There is good reason to doubt whether this would be appreciable in the cases taken of articles of considerable durability. If the government could reduce the consumption of food stuffs, such as wheat, and simultaneously of all substitutes, by one-seventh, it would be a very different matter.

But in the case of gold the interference of governments in the present day has little effect in increasing consumption. They do not collect it to consume it, but simply to sell it. In this country, beyond specifying this metal as the vehicle of value in contributing to the revenue, the interference appears to be limited to a restriction of the liberty of citizens to exchange promises of delivery of gold to bearer on demand. Bank-notes (or bills, as they seem to be called in your country) may only be issued by certain bankers, and by them only in a certain complex relation to the amount of gold they hold. But this is only a restriction in form, and not in quantity, because checks, drafts, and promissory notes other than to bearer on demand are issuable in unlimited quantity, subject to certain taxes — from which the other notes are not wholly exempt — and are transferable without further tax. What has this to do with the consumption of gold? Next to nothing!

Now there is no legal obstacle, nothing, in fact, whatever except the inconveniences of bulk, fluctuation of value, and other inherent defects, to prevent the introduction and circulation of promises of wheat, cotton, oil, iron, or other commodity. This would not have any material effect upon the consumption, production, cost, or value of these commodities. Speculative sales of "futures" tend on the whole to steady values and to diminish the frequency and the intensity of gluts and famines.

Gold and silver are not used (in the sense of being consumed) by their circulation. They are merely conveyed, transferred, and exchanged more frequently. The fact that they are so often bought by people who do not themselves require to use them is not unique. Every merchant does the same with the commodity to which he devotes his attention.* The peculiarity is that the trade in gold is familiar to every one. The portability, divisibility, and recognizability of this substance force it upon the attention of every one who avails himself of the services of others. The production and circulation of contracts for its future delivery are not unique. This is also done in the case of many other commodities. In both cases there is a very great convenience and economy; and in both there is a very appreciable danger. Any such writings of individualists as may in any way give the impression that the free circulation of mutual indebtedness, miscalled "mutual money," will be free from this element of danger are pernicious. Freedom to incur and to exchange debts is exceedingly desirable, but rather because they will encourage, purify, and chasten the spirit of enterprise, than that they will in themselves bring very noticeable economic gain.

Apart from the wear and tear involved, neither the government nor anyone else consumes one ha'penny worth more of gold by reason of its adoption in taxation and commerce as the most usual vehicle of value. Its use for this purpose may cause the world to hold a larger stock than it otherwise would, but this is in every way a benefit, because it steadies its value. If the metal were neglected, as platinum was until recently, then famine and glut might be observed. This would greatly lower the utility of gold as an intermediate exchange commodity, and would not help us to devise a substitute. It would throw upon every trade, including those who sell their own labor, a burden of doubt and uncertainty in estimating its fluctuations. The evil that government does by collecting needless millions is immeasurably greater than by its so-called maintenance of the gold standard.

Yours respectfully,

J. Greevz Fisher.

78 Harrowgate Road, Leeds, England.

Dogmatism can be justified only by the event. In its use not only does nothing succeed *like* success, but nothing succeeds *but* success. And nothing fails like failure. If Mr. Fisher, in addressing the Anarchists upon finance as if they were babies and he a giant, shall succeed in making his assumed superiority felt as a reality, he will not only be forgiven for his dogmatism, but highly respected for his knowledge and power; but if it shall appear that the ignorance and weakness are on his side rather than theirs, he will be covered not only with confusion by his error, but with ridicule by the collapse of his pretension. It is only just, however, to say that a comparison of his letter to Liberty with his letter to the "Herald of Anarchy" shows progress in the direction of modesty.

Already Mr. Fisher's pride has been followed by a fall. The central position taken by him at the start that government cannot affect the value of gold or any other commodity except by the slight additional demand which it creates as a consumer he has been forced to abandon at the first onslaught. If government were to allow the opening of theatres on Sunday, it would not thereby become a consumer of theatres itself (at least not in the economic sense, for, in the United States at any rate, our governors always go to the theatre as "deadheads"), and yet Mr. Fisher admits that in such a case the value of theatres would immediately rise very greatly. This admission is an abandonment of the position taken at first so confidently, and no other consideration can make it anything else. The fact that competition would soon arise to reduce the value does not alter the fact that for a time this action of government would materially raise it, which Mr. Fisher originally declared an impossibility. But even if such a plea had any pertinence, it could be promptly destroyed by a slight extension of the hypothesis. Suppose government, in addition to allowing the theatres now existing to open on Sunday, were to prohibit the establishment of any additional theatres. Then the value would not only go up, but stay up. It is hardly necessary to argue the matter further; Mr. Fisher undoubtedly sees that he is wrong. The facts are too palpable and numerous. Why, since my comment of a month ago on Mr. Fisher's position, it has transpired that the cost of making twist drills in the United States has been increased *five hundred and twenty per cent.* by the McKinley bill. Government cannot affect value, indeed!

In the paragraph to which Mr. Fisher's letter is a rejoinder I said that "when government decrees that all money shall be made of or issued against gold or

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* Division of labor originates in people making something they do not themselves want. It is further facilitated by selling this for one special commodity which is not directly wanted.

silver, these metals immediately take on an artificial, government-created value because of the *new use* which arbitrary power enables them to monopolize." Mr. Fisher meets this by attempting to belittle the restrictions placed upon the issue of paper money, as if all vitally necessary liberty to compete with the gold-bugs were even now allowed. Let me ask my opponent one question. Does the law of England allow citizens to form a bank for the issue of paper money against any property that they may see fit to accept as security; said bank perhaps owning no specie whatever; the paper money not redeemable in specie except at the option of the bank; the customers of the bank mutually pledging themselves to accept the bank's paper in lieu of gold or silver coin of the same face value; the paper being redeemable only at the maturity of the mortgage notes, and then simply by a return of said notes and a release of the mortgaged property, — is such an institution, I ask, allowed by the law of England? If it is, then I have only to say that the working people of England are very great fools not to take advantage of this inestimable liberty, that the editor of the "Herald of Anarchy" and his comrades have indeed nothing to complain of in the matter of finance, and that they had better turn their attention at once to the organization of such banks as that which I have just described. But I am convinced that Mr. Fisher will have to answer that these banks are illegal in England; and in that case I tell him again that the present value of gold is a monopoly value sustained by the exclusive monetary privilege given it by government. It may be true, as Mr. Fisher says, that just as much gold would be used if it did not possess this monopoly. But that has nothing to do with the question. Take the illustration that I have already used in this discussion when I said: "If government were to decree that all plates shall be made of tin, would not the value of tin rise and the value of china fall?" Now, if the supply of tin were limited, and if nearly all the tin were used in making plates, and if tin had no other use of great significance, it is quite conceivable that, if the decree prohibiting the use of china in making plates should be withdrawn, the same amount of tin might continue to be used for the same purpose as before, and yet the value of tin would fall tremendously in consequence of the admitted competition of china. And similarly, if all property were to be admitted to competition with gold in the matter of representation in the currency, it is possible that the same amount of gold would still be used as money, but its value would decrease notably, — would fall, that is to say, from its abnormal, artificial, government-created value, to its normal, natural, open-market value.

T.

Political Ethics and Justice.

In entering upon the attempt to consider and meet the objections urged by Mr. Donisthorpe, in his letter in Liberty of May 30, against absolutism in political ethics, I find it difficult to be original. Mr. Spencer has so amply and convincingly dealt with the subject, and has so patiently and thoroughly disposed of all current and imaginable objections, that one will cudgel his brain in vain to discover new arguments. And I suppose we all realize how little satisfaction there is in mere repetition of another's words. Still, the interests of truth are paramount, and if we cannot be original, there is the consolation that important truths will bear saying over and over again.

Perhaps the most important point which we must settle before the discussion of absolutism in political ethics can be advantageously resumed is that relating to the method of developed science. Asking what is Justice, Mr. Donisthorpe says:

> I am willing to agree that Justice "is based on biological and psychological facts," but I deny that we can say what it is, or on what biological and psychological facts it is based. This can only be approximately done by generalizing from myriads of cases admittedly just, and from these general rules extracting still higher generalizations. This is the method of induction; and when we have got at our concrete rules thus, we can, with great advantage, verify our conclusions, by deducing them from biological and even from prior physical laws. This is the method advocated by the Empirical school, and inasmuch as it has been accepted in *all* the concrete sciences (without exception), till we come to those dealing with the human mind, it would seem to be merely a question of time when it shall be accepted there also.

Upon the same question of methods I find, in Spencer's article on "Absolute Political Ethics" in the "Nineteenth Century" for January, 1890, statements at variance with those above made. Protesting against Professor Huxley's description of his method, Mr. Spencer says:

> I ought to be described as putting faith in simple deductions from abstract ethical necessities; which deductions are verified by infinitely numerous observations and experiences of semi-civilized and civilized mankind. Or rather I ought to be described as one who, contemplating the restraints everywhere put upon the various kinds of transgressions, and seeing in them all a common principle everywhere dictated by the necessities of an associated state, proceeds to develop the consequences of this common principle by deduction, and to justify both the deductions and the conclusions which legislators have empirically reached by showing that the two correspond. This method of deduction verified by induction is the method of developed science at large.

John Stuart Mill's opinion is worthy of our respect. What has he to say upon the question occupying us? In his "Logic" he takes the position that the "deductive method is destined irrevocably to predominate in the course of scientific investigation from this time forward." He affirms that "the advances henceforth to be expected even in physical, and still more in mental and social science, will be chiefly the result of deduction." In fact, he tells us that a revolution is peaceably and progressively effecting itself in philosophy, the reverse of that to which Bacon has attached his name. "That great man changed the method of the sciences from deductive to experimental, and it is now rapidly reverting from experimental to deductive." Mill continues:

> Among subjects really accessible to our faculties, those which still remain in a state of dimness and uncertainty (the succession of their phenomena not having yet been brought under fixed and recognizable laws) are mostly those of a very complex character, in which many agents are at work together, and their effects in a constant state of blending and intermixture. The disentangling of these crossing threads is a task attended with difficulties which, as we have already shown, are susceptible of solution by the instrument of deduction alone. Deduction is the great scientific work of the present and of future ages. The portion henceforth reserved for specific experience in the achievements of science, is mainly that of suggesting hints to be followed up by the deductive inquirer, and of confirming or checking his conclusions.

That Mill was right is clearly established by the notable fact that such additions and contributions to the social sciences as have been made since the publication of "Logic" have come entirely from believers in absolute political ethics and in the method of deduction verified by induction. The Empirical school has continued to doubt and ridicule "absolutism in political ethics," and to extol the virtues and fertility of its own method. But it is absolutely true that it has given us nothing new and has done nothing of the slightest value. Political economy has been almost wholly abandoned to the Empirical school — with what results? The weakness of orthodox economics has been thoroughly exposed; but nothing has been substituted, and at the present time we are farther than ever from the goal of the economists: there are no signs of the advent of a science of political economy. And I venture to say that the Empirical school will never achieve any positive results, and that economics will remain in the present unsatisfactory condition until the absolutists shall turn their attention to economic problems. This hint may amuse some able writers on economic questions; but I am content to have it dismissed as an absurdity and trust to the logic of events for vindication.

For an explanation and defence of absolutism in political ethics I must refer the reader to Spencer's article (already named), having space here only for a brief extract. Mr. Spencer writes:

> Now that an orderly social state has been maintained for generations, now that in daily intercourse men rarely use violence, commonly pay what they owe, and in most cases respect the claims of the weak as well as those of the strong; now that they are brought up with the idea that all men are equal before the law, and daily see judicial decisions turning upon the question whether one citizen has or has not infringed upon the equal right of another, — there exists in the general mind material for forming the conception of a *régime* in which men's activities are mutually limited, and in which maintenance of harmony depends on respect for the limits. There has arisen an ability to see that mutual limitations are necessitated when lives are carried on in proximity. . . . . And it has become manifest . . . . that there results an *à priori* system of absolute political ethics, — a system under which men of like natures, severally so constituted as spontaneously to refrain from trespassing, may work together without friction, and with the greatest advantage to each and all. . . .
>
> Relative political ethics, or that which deals with right and wrong in public affairs as partially determined by changing circumstances, cannot progress without taking into account right and wrong considered apart from changing circumstances, — cannot do without absolute political ethics, the propositions of which, deduced from the conditions under which life is carried on in an associated state, take no account of the special circumstances of any particular associated state.
>
> The set of deductions thus arrived at is verified by an immeasurably vast induction, or rather by a great assemblage of vast inductions. For what else are the laws and judicial systems of all civilized nations, and of all societies which have risen above savagery?

Since I have admitted the value of the "middle principles" reached by induction, I do not exactly understand the pertinence and force of Mr. Donisthorpe's admonition that to attempt the deductive method before we have ascertained by induction what the group-morals are is the height of baseless confidence and is bound to end in failure. Without induction, without facts and data, nothing can plainly be undertaken. But the claim is that we have ample material and abundant data; that we are ready for the application of the deductive method; and that there is no excuse for delay. To expect those who deny this to view favorably the attempt at constructing a system of absolute political ethics would manifestly be illogical; but much will be gained from a clear definition of the issue. The question is, Do we know enough of the principles of life in general and the experiences of societies in particular to be able to construct a system of absolute political ethics? A negative answer to this seems to me preposterous.

Mr. Donisthorpe writes:

> I believe that Justice has a connotation, but that it is still unknown. It is the general name we give to that which is common to thousands and millions of decisions regarded as fair or *just*, — *we know not why*. Two hunters have a dispute about the ownership of a dog or a spear. They both think themselves in the right. They call on the passer-by, the *vir pietate gravis*, to adjudicate. He decides, but would be puzzled to state the grounds or his decision in general terms. The same kind of thing is done again and again. These cases which are generally accepted as satisfactory are called Just.

It is perfectly true that the average man does not know why those arrangements and decisions which strike him as fair and just *are* fair and just; he does not rise to the abstraction of Justice as a general and absolute principle; but simply *feels* that a certain way is infinitely superior to any other conceivable way. The sentiment of justice guides him, and such guidance is necessarily limited to simple cases. But those of us who study the conditions of life and the feelings of men can and do know what quality in actions makes them just and what justice is. As Mr. Spencer says: "Though the moral sentiments generated in civilized men by daily contact with social conditions and gradual adaptation to them are indispensable as incentives and deterrents; and though the intuitions corresponding to these sentiments, have, in virtue of their origin, a general authority to be reverently recognized; yet the sympathies and antipathies hence originating, together with the intellectual expressions of them, are, in their primitive forms, necessarily vague. To make guidance by them adequate to all requirements, their dictates have to be interpreted and made definite by science; to which end there must be analysis of those conditions to complete living which they respond to, and from converse with which they have arisen." Those of us who have grasped the principle of equal liberty certainly know what social arrangements fulfil the first essential condition of human happiness. The fact that equal liberty is not grasped by everybody at once is no argument against

the validity of equal liberty. As I have said in a former article: "Every man believes in fair play and equality of liberty — as far as his powers of abstraction and generalization permit him to apply the principle. The most cultured and refined representatives of civilized humanity present the highest development of the sentiment as well as the idea of justice, and the degree of perfection they have reached is a degree every human being may and will reach, even though we still find that men who profess to be, and actually are, governed by the principle of justice are ready to advocate measures involving outrageous violations of liberty. Lack of logic and imagination and penetration is what these inconsistent men suffer from." The important fact to consider is that we are able to point out their inconsistencies and to indicate the true solutions of the problems in conformity with equal liberty. In ninety-nine out of every hundred cases we know precisely what justice is, — that is, what action consists with the principle of preserving to each individual the highest liberty compatible with equality of liberty; and if in the hundredth case the relation to equal liberty is not obvious, the reasonable proposition to refrain from the application of force as long as no imperative necessity exists for bringing matters to a summary and final issue is likely to commend itself to all and to be accepted in lieu of a more scientific solution.

V. Y.

Mr. Tandy's Entanglement.

In criticism of my article on "Biology and Sociology," which appeared in a recent number of the "Twentieth Century," Mr. Tucker says:

> Mr. Tandy further tells us that the now accepted biological doctrine of the *non*-inheritance of acquired habits (the opposite of Spencer's views, remember,) is the strongest possible argument against State Socialism and for Individualism. Now Spencer's sociology is intensely antagonistic to State Socialism and favorable to Individualism. Whence it follows, in violation of the conclusion that Mr. Tandy drove home upon us a moment ago, that Spencer must have arrived at correct sociological conclusions, not indeed without previous biological study, but, stranger still, *in spite of such study*.

If Mr. Tucker had devoted half the time to trying to obtain a just idea of what my article implied that he apparently has to endeavoring to discover imaginary inconsistencies, he would have seen that I lamented the fact that the question of "use-inheritance" has been almost altogether ignored in sociological discussions. The only persons who have built any argument on this point — and even they seem to have done so unwittingly — are those State Socialists who, admitting Anarchy to be the ideal condition, yet claim that we must pass through a period of State Socialism in order to make men good enough for Anarchy; or, in other words, advocate State Socialism as a means of stirpiculture.

Spencer is a stanch advocate of natural selection, a theory which is materially strengthened by the overthrow of "use-inheritance," and it is from this biological law that he has derived his sociological ideas, ignoring the question of "use-inheritance" altogether in relation to sociology. There is nothing astonishing in the fact that Spencer should arrive at many correct sociological ideas, in spite of an error in biology, which he never applied to the former science. Had he built entirely on the use-inheritance doctrine, ignoring the theory of natural selection, and had still arrived at the same conclusions, Mr. Tucker might have had some cause for astonishment.

Mr. Tucker apparently differs from me on this subject, and it is but fair to assume that he means something; the only question is: what? I attempt to prove three statements:

(1) That biology bears a very important relation to sociology;

(2) That the theory of use-inheritance, held by Darwin and Spencer, has been overthrown, and has hitherto been practically ignored in sociological discussions;

(3) That the overthrow of this doctrine, by proving natural and sexual selection to be the only factors in biological progress, materially strengthens the individualistic position.

With which of these statements does Mr. Tucker disagree?

We must really take Mr. Tucker's boast that, when he opens his mouth, he does not put his foot in it more as a pledge of future good conduct than as applied to his utterances up to date.

FRANCIS D. TANDY.

Mr. Tandy is conveniently forgetful of some things that he said in the article which I criticised. Let me refresh his memory with an extract from it.

> If a man has a tendency to drink intemperately, it would be better for society that he be permitted to drink himself to death at once (if use-inheritance is disproved), than that he should live and beget offspring who will be liable to inherit this same tendency. If, on the other hand, his acquired habit of temperance (acquired by inability to procure liquor) be transmitted, then we may be able to find a plausible excuse for prohibition; and so through all the various social questions; *if use-inheritance be correct, the State Socialist may have a fair basis for his doctrines*; but if not, the Individualist can find no stronger argument.

It will be seen from the words which I italicise that Mr. Tandy pronounced the question of use-inheritance of paramount and pivotal importance in its bearing upon the issue between State Socialism and Individualism. He tells us that, if use-inheritance is correct, then no consideration or considerations can be considered as excluding State Socialism. Now Spencer believes in use-inheritance, and yet his sociology excludes State Socialism. Therefore his sociology is inconsistent with his biology, and, in Mr. Tandy's view, his sociology is right and his biology is wrong. But Mr. Tandy, who believes the mastery of biology to be indispensable to the understanding of sociology, must believe also that biological errors involve sociological errors, and especially must he believe it in a case like the one under consideration, where, as he claims, the biological error stands in pivotal relation to the sociological conclusion. Thus Mr. Tandy is entangled in an absurd contradiction, and he cannot wriggle out of it. If Spencer, believing in use-inheritance, neglected to consider that all-important bearing upon State Socialism which Mr. Tandy says it has, then he was an incompetent biologist, and therefore — always according to Mr. Tandy — an incompetent sociologist. But, again according to Mr. Tandy, he is not an incompetent sociologist. Here we actually see Mr. Tandy with his foot in his mouth. Until he can exhibit me in a similar attitude, his charge that I am always to be found in it will not be believed by the readers of Liberty.

Mr. Tandy is absolutely without justification in assuming from my previous article that I either differ or agree with him in his view of the relation of biology to sociology. That article was written to show, not where I differ or agree with him, but where he differs with himself. Having amply shown it, and thereby made manifest to all readers blessed with a sense of humor how ridiculous it is in such an offender against logic to sneer at "the quibbling of the Anarchists over the copyright question," I emphatically decline to be drawn into a discussion of the problem of use-inheritance. In the first place, I am certainly unfitted for such a discussion; and, in the second place, I doubt if Mr. Tandy's equipment for it is any better than my own.

T.

An Amendment Accepted.

When I called S. P. Putnam a "contemptible humbug," I knew that I should displease his associate, George Macdonald; for I remembered the extravagant eulogy which the latter passed upon the former in welcoming him back to the editorial chair of "Freethought," a eulogy explicable to those who know Putnam only on the theory that its author is wildly in love. Hence I am not surprised to find myself the object of the following "Observation" in "Freethought":

> Alas! that the day should come when I can take pleasure in rebuking my Uncle Benjamin Tucker; but I now delight in doing so, since I feel certain that, when he refers to Mr. Samuel P. Putnam as a "contemptible humbug," he talks unscientifically and uneconomically. It was bad enough for my uncle to say that Hugh O. Pentecost spoke from the recesses of an intellectual vacuum, or words to that effect, but "contemptible humbug" comes nearer to a fighting term. The appended statement by Mr. Putnam has aroused my distinguished relative to the pitch of inaccuracy:
>
> Anarchy means personal liberty. We select that and stand by it. Socialism means cooperation. We select that and stand by it. Nationalism means the rights and dignity of labor. We select that. Communism means a commonwealth. We select that. Free trade means reciprocity. We select that. Protection means industrial advancement. We select that.
>
> That, you see, is the method of eclecticism. It finds sermons in books, stones in the running brook, and a soul of good in things evil. If I am not quoting Shakspere correctly, somebody will kindly tell me whom I am quoting. I am as much entranced as anyone could be by Mr. Putnam's facility of selection, but I would not travel all the way from Anarchism to the protective tariff to get the goods that are kept at the first place. For, besides personal liberty, the Anarchist offers cooperation, "rights and dignity of labor," a commonwealth, reciprocity, and industrial advancement. An economic scheme that does not provide for those items is scarcely worth considering. I judge that Mr. Putnam's object in patronizing the various schools is to so distribute his custom that Anarchism may not become a monopolist. About the dignity of labor I am not settled in my mind whether any system offers it. A man may labor and he may have dignity, but he does not appear very dignified, as a general proposition, while he is working. Dignity, like a plug hat, is not compatible with no collar and one suspender.
>
> I maintain that my uncle has departed from scientific accuracy in the use of the epithet "contemptible." That specimens of the genus humbug are common to the human family cannot be denied, but they have their place in nature, and to dismiss them as contemptible is to ignore an inexpugnable factor in the solution of the social problem. The disputant who employs epithets in the place of carefully defined terms relinquishes the title of a philosopher in order that he may enjoy the vicious pleasure of being a scold.
>
> Besides, in the present instance my relative has made a distinctly erroneous classification. His habit of jumping upon the innocent student of political economy and yanking him into the Anarchistic camp on suspicion and without warrant has involved him in mistakes, which he sometimes seeks to correct by making others, as in the case under discussion. I think that the law of equal freedom will gain more supporters if it is found that its advocates obey also the law of equal justice and make no statements that are untrue.

I submit to the castigation thus inflicted by my nephew with a good grace that is inspired by his reenforcement, in his own peculiar and effective style, of my condemnation of Putnam's ridiculous position. He objects only to the epithet. Well, I am not strenuous on this point; and since he seems to offer to admit that Putnam is a humbug if I will withdraw the word "contemptible," I accept the proposition. Voltaire said that the adjective, although it agrees with the noun in gender, number, and case, is its greatest enemy. Hence, in parting with an adjective to perfect my right to use a good strong noun, I feel that I have the best of the bargain. Besides, though I am rated as obstinate, I am always ready to go half-way to meet any decent man, let alone such a whole-souled good fellow as my nephew. So we will consider it settled that Putnam is not a contemptible humbug, but a humbug of respectable proportions.

T.

A Logical Advocate.

I had intended to make some comments upon Tak Kak's last chapter on copyright, as well as to notice the amusing passage-at-arms between Mr. Lloyd's metaphysical Own Advocate and the dull Devil's Advocate in his service; but I am glad to find myself relieved from two-thirds of this task by the receipt of a letter from a friend in which the logical reader may find most of my opponents' objections fully met and covered.

My friend writes: "Liberty containing your additional remarks on copyright has just reached me and has been read with interest. I think your observations quite just. . . . Controversially, however, I fear your last remarks have weak points: as where you say that "the objection, if valid, destroys the Anarchistic position, etc.," and yet say below: "But the truth is that there is no reason for applying the principle," etc. There is no *real* inconsistency in your statements I think, but an apparent one perhaps. The latter statement I think is cogent and, as you say yourself, new. It must have occurred to all of us, but has not been expressed before, I believe. And there can be no doubt that the consideration suggested is fundamental. In the conception of property in land which limits equitable ownership to occupation (meaning use) the element of fixity in the amount of land is essential. If the amount of land were indefinitely augmentable, I think the arguments which show that equity requires ownership to be limited by use would not seem to us valid. But, as you say, no such limits to ideas, nor even to commercially-valuable ideas (a much smaller quantity) are discernible. And hence the personal-use limitation loses its force. I must say however that I do not agree with you that the preventing-of-others-from-discovering objection has any force whatever. First, suppose discovery by No. 1 prevents No. 2: what is it that has prevented No. 2 — is it our politico-juridical system? Not at all. The thing that prevents No. 2 (if he is prevented) is simply a physical fact — a phenomenon of nature — an accident of time. The notion of justice is irrelevant to a deprivation so caused. Second, I deny that prior discovery *alone* does prevent. There must be added contact with the thing discovered, and *understanding*. I deny that any man seeing a locomotive in action is thereby prevented from originating the locomotive. In this case deliberate choice — leading No. 2 to study a thing already existing in preference to studying his own mind (out of which a locomotive might spring if he chose that course) — is necessary in order that priority should act as a bar to new discovery. Finally, I deny that it is possible to determine what is just by considering possible results. We must appeal to the generalization of equal

liberty and abide by the decision. As you have repeatedly and pertinently insisted what is there in the act of publication that destroys the r. . of exclusive use acknowledged to exist in the first place. Nothing, absolutely nothing. A man, having originated, being for the moment in exclusive possession, chooses to sell — what? his whole possible usufruct (at $1.00 per volume)? No. He chooses to sell a portion of his whole possible usufruct, *e. g.*, as much as a man can get from *one* copy of his book — or as much as an operator can get from the use of *one* machine. So much, and no more, he agrees to sell at $1.00 (say) for a book, or at $1,000 (say) for a machine. These, it seems to me, are the clear implications when 'ideas' are sold in printed volumes or industrial implements. It is open to any one to *assert* that this makes us the slaves of a small aristocracy of creative intelligence: I reply that it is impossible that adherence to equal liberty can result in an *unjust* inequality."

There remains nothing for me to consider but the contention as to the non-invasive quality of the act of copying, or imitation. I had charged Tak Kak with seeking to decide *à priori* what property is and with making arbitrary distinctions between "material" objects, properly appropriable, and "immaterial" objects, claimed as not rightly appropriable. This charge he was prompt to "repel." But what do we find him maintaining in his last contribution? "Property, he says, in the economic sense, "is alienable. The giver or seller parts with it in conveying it. This characteristic distinguishes property from skill and information." That this characteristic *distinguishes*, I admit cheerfully; but I deny that the right of property is in any wise affected by this distinction. To say that only that is property which is alienable, is arbitrary, is an *à priori* assumption. Tak Kak continues: "Bread is property. Those who hold that the art of baking is property, hold that it is alienable, but monopoly consists in the attempt to make property of liberties, discoveries, sciences, and arts by a pretended or forced alienation. This," Tak Kak adds, "may be no argument. If so, I prefer to make none." This, I say, is certainly *no* argument, as I accept neither the definition of property nor the definition of monopoly above given. Property is limited only by equal liberty, and nothing possessed consistently with equal liberty may rightly be stigmatized as monopoly. Here I am reminded that both Tak Kak and Mr. Lloyd profess anxiety to square their position with equal liberty. How successful their attempt is, it remains to see.

Tak Kak prefers "the direct examination whether liberty is invaded by copying," but says that, "of course if sufficient care is taken in making the more roundabout deduction *via* property the corollary of liberty, it must result the same." And he also reminds us that, if "the inquiry *via* the corollary seems to some persons to show an infringement . . . . it will be well for them to examine all the factors, to discover where there has been a false principle admitted." I confess that I do not see how a direct examination is possible in this case; and it seems plain that the difficulties surrounding the question of property in ideas are precisely due to this impossibility of a direct examination. It is utterly unfair and unwise on the part of my opponents to continue to darken counsel and intensify the confusion prevailing in this division of ethics by such inconsequential talk as this: "The fact that A occupies and uses a piece of land prevents B from occupying the same land, but there is nothing in equity to prevent his taking up a similar piece of unoccupied land and farming it in precisely the same manner. This is imitation, not invasion. . . . . First discovery has nothing to do with just ownership anyhow. . . . . Discoveries can be repeated — that is, copied indefinitely without invasion." The question *whether* imitation, in certain cases, is invasion or not cannot be settled by a dogmatic declaration that imitation is not invasion. The demand for a "direct examination" is an idle quibble and a mockery when it is universally acknowledged that a direct examination is impossible. I know and concede that it is entirely possible to copy or "imitate" an author without invading his castle and killing or disabling or otherwise injuring his person. The question is whether the act of copying itself is not an invasion of the author's liberty; and that cannot be settled by any direct examination, but *via* property in ideas the corollary of liberty. If property in ideas can be shown to be a logical deduction from the equal liberty principle, then it is an invasion and a wrong to copy or "imitate" the author without his consent, all metaphysical subtleties and distinctions to the contrary notwithstanding.

That property in ideas is a logical deduction from equal liberty has been clearly demonstrated in previous articles, and need not be argued here. V. Y.

Has Seen the Folly of Parliamentarism.

[G. W. Foote in London Freethinker.]

Unity of action can only flow from unity of design. All history shows us that leadership is indispensable. Abolish responsible power, and you only get irresponsible power. In my younger days I thought otherwise. I believed in "parliamentarism" pure and simple. But age has brought experience, and, I hope, wisdom, and I see that some kind of subordination — perfectly voluntary, and therefore perfectly honorable — is necessary to the success of every enterprise.

The Society for Preventing Civilization.

[Herbert Spencer in the St. James Gazette.]

Sir Henry Maine pointed out that, whereas in ancient European societies the family was the unit of composition, gradual changes have tended to make the individual the unit of composition. Instead of being a group despotically governed by the oldest male ascendant — father or grandfather — into which the State did not and could not intrude, the family has become a group no longer despotically governed in the old sense, when there was life-and-death power over children; and the State has come to intrude into it more and more and to take cognizance, not simply of the group as a whole, but of its individual members: the ancient family organization has dissolved.

This dissolution of the family has been in large measure a beneficent change; but a question now coming to the front is, "How far ought it to go?" More and more the tendency is to absolve parents from their responsibilities, and to saddle these responsibilities on the community. As I remarked twenty years ago:

Everywhere there is a tacit enunciation of the marvellous doctrine that citizens are not responsible individually for the bringing up each of his own children, but that these same citizens incorporated into a society, are each of them responsible for the bringing up of everybody else's children!

And then, after pointing out that from undertaking to rear children mentally the State would presently undertake to rear them physically, by giving food and clothing, — a prophecy in course of fulfilment sooner than I expected, — I went on to say:

We are progressing toward the wonderful notion, here and there finding tacit expression, that people are to marry when they feel inclined, and other people are to take the consequences. — *The Study of Sociology, pp.* 370-1.

It is surprising with what light hearts people are led to abrogate the order of nature and to substitute an order of their own devising. All life on the earth has risen to its present height under the system of parental obligation. Throughout the process has so worked that the best-nurtured offspring of the best parents have survived and maintained the race, while offspring inadequately nurtured have failed to leave self-sufficing posterity. And now it has come to be thought that these strong parental feelings, which in billions of creatures throughout millions of years have worked so beneficially, may, with advantage, be replaced by public sentiment working through State machinery! I hold, contrariwise, that the replacing of parental responsibilities by social responsibilities will inevitably cause degradation and eventual extinction.

Respecting the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the question is: Will it work toward the enforcing of parental responsibilities or toward the undermining of them? To bring punishment on brutal and negligent parents seems, on the whole, a beneficial function; for though, by protecting the children of bad parents (who are on the average of cases themselves bad) there is some interference with the survival of the fittest, yet it is a defensible conclusion that in the social state philanthropic feeling may, to this extent, mitigate the rigor of natural law But if, instead of enforcing parental responsibilities, there is any undertaking of them, as in some cases there seems to have been, mischief will result. Or, if the action of the society is carried too far, parents may be debarred by fear from using fit discipline; an evil which is said to have already arisen. Or if, again, in the same way that voluntary education has grown into State education, this voluntary society should become a branch of police, then there will result a system like that which existed among the ancient Peruvians, who had officers to inspect households and see that the children were properly managed. Unfortunately, very innocent-looking germs are apt to develop into structures which are anything but innocent; and, as I have already said, it will require great and constant care to prevent such a result in the present case.

The Democratic Opportunity.

[Galveston News.]

It is reported that the Kansas Farmers' Alliance proposes to give the sub-treasury plan a practical test, as nearly as can be under the present condition, by voluntary action, by establishing banks, with warehouses attached, in which grain and other agricultural products can be stored, and on which money will be loaned at a fixed ratio of value. It will be obvious, of course, that the rate of interest will have to be much higher than two per cent., or else the Alliance will have to make a sacrifice by furnishing the money at a low rate, while it could lend it elsewhere at a higher. Should anyone venture to issue notes for circulation, he would be liable for indictment under United States law. While, therefore, it seems within the bounds of possibility for the Alliance to demonstrate, by putting up some cash without interest, that the warehouse system and money lending on products would convenience the borrower, and work smoothly and safely, it will not be possible to make more than a miniature showing of the plan as proposed in Kansas. But might not Alliance views and Democratic views be harmonized by a modification of the banking law? Why should not congress replace the present prohibition on bank issues by a law liberal in principle, yet strict in requirements to secure the solvency of the banks? Surely substantial relief could be given were the currency allowed to be issued to amount to but one-half or sixty per cent. of the cash value of the merchandise deposited in warehouse. The closest federal inspection might be provided for, and yet the whole business could be transacted by private companies. Why not then make the right equal for all classes? This would not abridge the rights of the farmers, but it would remove the objection based on the activity of government in business, and also the objection as to favoritism to a class. When it is said that favoritism is an established practice, Democrats reply that one wrong departure does not justify another. The Alliance must be very confident of its strength if it would refuse modifications. But the Alliance has declared that it only wants substantial relief, and is open to consider other plans. The first talk of the Democrats has not seemed hopeful of reconciling the aim of the Alliance, which is intended to be practical relief, with Democratic theory, and the Democratic leaders seem to have put on their armor to fight the paternalism, which is merely an incident, perhaps, not an essential in the plan. Good currency and plenty of it is the Alliance demand. To keep the government out of banking and warehouse business is the Democratic demand. Where is the necessity for these two to clash against each other? Cannot the government so condition and inspect the chartering of banks of issue as to insure security? Cannot the property owners furnish such security as to challenge the most searching investigation? Of course it is impossible to have a large volume of currency and have it redeemable in gold on demand. It is possible, however, to have it redeemable in the valuable things warehoused, and which will have been valued say at two dollars for every dollar loaned. If any party says that that is not well-secured money, such party is not content with the gold standard, but insists upon a limitation as to means of payment, even against the freedom of parties who would be mutually agreed. Present financial laws are restrictive and paternal in that they do not allow the citizen to be the judge as to what he will be satisfied to receive as currency. No sub-treasury advocate doubts that a note secured on wheat or cotton will be a good note, provided there be a good margin of security to cover a possible decline. The idea is that the property will certainly sell for gold to the full amount of notes issued, hence that the notes are perfectly good. Now, what does Democracy declare? That the citizen ought to be deprived of his business freedom? No; but that the government is there to see that every liberty is exercised with due security of others, including, of course, true property rights, which represent past labor and contracts. There ought not then to be a conflict between the essential aim of the Alliance and the creed of the Democracy, as the one relates to a business facility and the other relates to governmental method. Somehow the citizens should be enabled to carry out their business plans if they can give security, and somehow Democratic statesmanship should be able to decide what are the measures of security and supervision which any banking and note-issuing and warehousing business calls for at the hands of the government for protection of the public against fraud. The Alliance can trust itself, perhaps, and the statesmen can say, perhaps, what evidences of ability and good faith will make the public safe as to Alliance notes and at the same time make the law general and impartial.

Ingersoll's Jingoism.

[Toronto Labor Advocate.]

The most noteworthy feature of the "North American Review" for June is a discussion between Gen. Rush C. Hawkins and Col. Robert G. Ingersoll, the noted Agnostic lecturer, on the social, moral, and political condition of the United States. "Brutality and Avarice Triumphant" is the title of Gen. Hawkins's paper, in which he sets forth, in fittingly plain and emphatic language, the terrible social abuses and political degradation to which so much attention has latterly been directed. His indictment of present-day civilization is a forcible and convincing one, but not more so than many of similar articles from the pens of social reformers, and the principal interest centres in Col. Ingersoll's reply, under the heading of "Is Avarice Triumphant?" in which the brilliant special pleader makes out as good a case as possible for existing institutions.

With a great many people Col. Ingersoll passes for an advanced thinker, and a man thoroughly in sympathy with the popular movement. It must, therefore, be somewhat disappointing to such to find him posing as a champion of the very worst abuses and villainies of the age, and bringing his undoubted eloquence and argumentative power to justify the wholesale robbery of the people by railroad monopolies and the manifold rascalities of the competitive [?] system. Col. Ingersoll is driven to have recourse to the patriotic subterfuge as a means of shirking disagreeable facts which he dare not face. He disingenuously charges his opponent with want of patriotism because his utterances revealing the social and moral rottenness of the community and the infamies perpetrated in the name of the government may be quoted by the enemies of republican institutions. "No American," he says, "should ever write a line that can be sneeringly quoted by an enemy of the great republic." If this rule were to be followed out, abuses would never be rectified, for

nobody could call attention to it without giving the enemy a chance to sneer. The Colonel indulges in an outburst of national glorification over the abolition of black slavery. He does not stop to consider that the early anti-slavery men were charged with disloyalty and want of patriotism.

Col. Ingersoll's paper exhibits its author in his true character as a spokesman of the privileged classes who is willing to hire out his pen or his tongue as lawyer, lecturer, or writer to defend any abuse and justify the wrongs by which his patrons profit. We hope that it will disillusionize some of the hero-worshippers who have been deceived by the shallow generalities and ornamental commonplaces about liberty and progress, which form part of his stock-in-trade, into believing him a genuine social reformer. He is a mere phrase-monger, who uses his wonderful gift of language to conceal the superficiality of his ideas which, stripped of their verbiage, would attract no attention whatever. He makes great professions of liberalism, but somehow on every practical question he is always found in alliance with the capitalistic, corrupt, or reactionary elements, — the champion of the privileges of wealth and vested wrong, — whether as corporation lawyer, campaign speaker, or magazine writer.

The Majority Superstition.

[The Commoner and Glassworker.]

There is an old superstition that a righteous majority can do as it sees fit. But it is a superstition that is bound to fade away. It is the logical outgrowth of previous superstitions. Time was when everyone believed in the divine right of kings to rule. A few heretics arose and demolished that idea. The next step was a constitutional government, with perhaps an emperor or ruler as executive. Then came the elective executive, as we know it in the United States. It was certainly morally wrong for a single man to rule half a million, but people have concluded that it is morally right for a million to rule a single man. This is a superstition, and I am fully aware that he who objects to it will be designated a social heretic. But this is to be expected. Without the brave heretics where would we be? Still in the dark! We boast of the sovereignty of the people, but he can never be a sovereign who must submit to the will of another. One portion of our people are sovereign, the other portion are slaves. The majority is the sovereign, the minority the slave. The point I wish to make clear is that the majority has no natural or moral right to rule a minority, except the right of force, and if we admit that a rule of force is natural, then, of course, the rule of a majority is O. K. At the same time the majority should not kick when a good-sized minority makes it unpleasant for them by the use of the same force. It is not right to term them traitors, rebels, disturbers of the peace, and utterly vile; they are as good as a forceful majority, only not quite so strong. It will be a welcome day when men realize their relative positions to each other. Then a majority will mind its own business and the minority will do likewise. The great trouble today lies in the fact that somebody is always trying to mind the other fellow's business. No sooner does an individual get an idea into his head than he runs to the law-makers and asks them to force its acceptance onto everybody else. Some good citizen, for instance, concludes that it is unwholesome to eat pork, it being a trifle more indigestible than many other articles of food, or he may appreciate the demoralizing influence of opium or rum. Immediately he hies himself unto the august presence of our representatives (?) and there he refuses to rest easily till the august representatives pass a law prohibiting the eating of pork, smoking of opium, and drinking of rum. The aforesaid good citizen is not content to abjure these pernicious agencies himself, but he must compel others to do likewise. I am perfectly aware that no law has been yet made that prohibits the eating of pork, but there are measures on our statute books equally absurd. Thus the shameful farce of legislation goes on from time out of mind, till we will probably hear of the crash of matter and the wreck of worlds.

Usury is under another special law. Whose business is it how much a person may charge for the use of money. Is it not a private contract, and do we not, at least theoretically, hold private contracts to be inviolable? But a usury law is passed for the special benefit of the borrower, and thus we flagrantly advertise our inconsistency. At the same time there are other special laws that are made for the money lenders alone. We preach the survival of the fittest as our motto, and act the survival of the rankest in our laws. People can make arrangements to suit themselves without the aid of the law-makers, but, until they learn how, they must groan under their burdens.

A Sign of Revolution.

The "Speaker" notes that a literary prophet has arisen on this side of the Atlantic. Mr. Mayo W. Hazeltine predicts the deposition of the young, unmarried girl from her place as the central figure in English fiction, and the instalment in her stead, as in France, of *la femme de trente ans*. The new novel will take life as it is, more particularly the life of people in society. The Americans are asking who in their country is to write the new novel? The men who could write it are not "in society," and those who see most of society cannot write. Mr. Hazeltine's answer is prompt: "The women themselves must do the work — have, in fact, begun to do it." What change is about to take place in the American social order? There the young girl is the central figure in life. All men adore her; her father and brothers labor for her, and her lover submits without a murmur to all her caprices. When she marries, she sinks into insignificance. How will the new novel be able to take American life as it is, if the married woman is to be its central figure? Has Mr. Hazeltine a social revolution up his sleeve?

The Secret of Russian Tyranny.

It is surprising to find the following in the Catholic and Legitimist "Figaro" of Paris, written from Russia by the staff correspondent which that journal sent to Moscow to represent it at the French Exhibition there:

I do not say that the social question will not arise some day in Russia as everywhere else. But not as soon. As long as the Moscow cabmen shall feel the necessity of lifting their cap and crossing themselves — a hundred times a day — when passing before their images and under the sacred entrance of the Kremlin, they will not be ripe for a strike. And what I say of the cabmen is true of the entire Russian prolétariat. Give the Russian workman some straw to sleep on, two rations a day of cabbage and meal, a few glasses of *kvass*, thirty roubles a month, the privilege of rest from work a hundred and fifty days in the year in honor of the Church, and the liberty to go to live for a few weeks every summer in the country, where his wife and children await him cultivating the land, and he is content.

An Economist's Superstition.

[Today.]

Mr. Edward Atkinson begins an article on free coinage in the May "Forum" with the assertion that "the government rightly assumes the function of coinage in order to give absolute assurance that each coin contains a certain quantity" of gold or silver. On this point the eminent statistician is perfectly at one with the ignorant demagogues at Cincinnati. The notion is almost universal that coining money is "an inalienable part of sovereignty," a "natural function of government." This is a superstition: coining is no more a natural function of government than wheat-raising. But it is useless to reason with people about the superstitions by which they are possessed, whether they are intelligent or ignorant. A man who, having before him the record of all the dishonesty which governments have been guilty of in this matter of coinage, still advocates governmental coinage, in order that "absolute assurance" may be given, certainly is not open to evidence of any kind. A few lines below his opening statement Mr. Atkinson calls attention to the fact that our own government continues coining silver dollars containing only from seventy-six to eighty cents' worth of silver. If a private individual sold bushels of corn containing only fifty pounds, or tons of coal weighing only nineteen hundred pounds, and if all his ancestors for two or three thousand years had been guilty of the same practices, his standard would hardly be accepted as absolute assurance.

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